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Conservation Pledge

I give my
pledge as an American
to save and faithfully to
defend from waste the
natural resources of
my country—its soil
and minerals, its
forests, waters
and wildlife

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vation of Louisiana's nat-
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Thousands of miles of waterways such as shown on the front cover offer Louisiana boaters and fishermen unlimited opportunity to enjoy these inland sports which get into high gear in May and June, continuing all summer. This lacework of waterways—rivers, bayous and lakes is virtually unequalled in the United States. Added to the abundance of water, the scenic beauty is unsurpassed. The banks are bounded by graceful willows or stately cypress trees and hardwoods trailing heavy beards of picturesque Spanish moss. May and June beckon the boaters and the fishermen. (Cover photo by Robert N. Dennie)

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drain them, except for the hunting ponds, when the season opens.

Reduce grazing to a low level or prohibit it. Cattle eat the seed heads, trample it into the ground and trample the vegetation thus exposing seed to large flocks of small birds.

In fallow fields, brown top millet planted in late July makes a high yield and is an excellent duck food when flooded. Seed is readily available at many seed stores and production is simple. If planted early, it also provides dove shooting.

Cover is generally absent in rice fields. Allow weedy growth to remain along canals and fence rows and if possible on intrafield levees. Because of the lack of cover, shooting in open rice fields is more frightening to ducks than marsh shooting. Shoot ponds only two days per week and only in the morning. Be well settled in your blind when shooting time begins, shoot early and get out. Allow as much rest time for ducks as possible.

Build box-type pit blinds from $\frac{3}{4}$ marine plywood and set them deep in the ground. Camouflage them well with natural vegetation. Determine the general flight pattern of ducks in the area and place your blind accordingly. Since all shooting should be done in the morning, avoid locating your blind where you must face the sun. Use a camouflaged net-type cover that can be thrown clear when you are ready to shoot. Cover your blind when not in use to keep out mammals, reptiles and rainwater.

Use several decoys, preferably a mixture of pintail, mallard and a few poule-deau. Place a group of goose decoys in the water along one side of the pond and spread them off onto the adjacent dry land.

Don't jump into rice field shooting suddenly. Deliberately plan your operation. Operate on a small scale the first year to gain experience and to give the land owner an opportunity to become familiar with problems associated with this type of management. Don't expect to provide shooting for a large number of hunters. Limit your group to three or four hunters. Development of rice fields is one of the few remaining opportunities to secure a place to hunt waterfowl. Begin planning this month. *

BANDING FACTS

Ted Joanen and Howard Dupie

WATERFOWL BANDING programs conducted on Rockefeller Refuge each year have revealed several interesting facts concerning the movements, homing patterns and kill data, on some of our wintering waterfowl here in Louisiana. The program was started on Rockefeller Refuge during the winter of 1960 and since its initiation 10,939 birds were banded. Efforts were directed towards banding birds which played important roles to the hunters here in the state.

Post season banding or banding after the waterfowl season has closed usually begins on Rocke-

feller Refuge in January and continues through March, depending upon weather conditions. During this past banding season 1,566 ducks and geese were banded. This includes lesser scaup, pintails, mallards, mottled ducks, blue and green-winged teal, ring necked duck, gadwall, wood-duck, fulvous tree duck, blue and Canada geese.

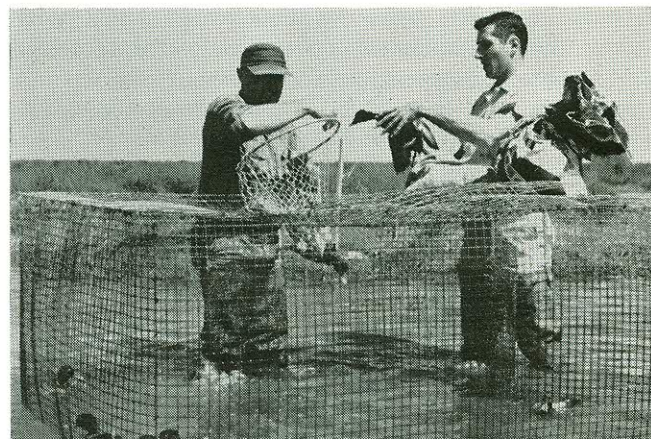
Recovery rate of banded scaup was a low 2.02%. A total of 6,176 scaup were banded but only 125 bands were returned.

Banding recoveries for lesser scaup showed 65.5 per cent of the banded birds killed were taken in the Mississippi Flyway and 34.5 per cent were killed in the Central and Atlantic Flyways, Alaska, Canada, Mexico. Of the 65.5 per cent killed in the Mississippi Flyway 42.5 per cent were recovered in Minnesota, 34 per cent recovered in Louisiana, 10 per cent in Missouri and 9 per cent in Wisconsin. Other states included Iowa, Alabama, and Indiana all having recovered 1.5 per cent of the Louisiana banded scaup.

Lesser Scaup were found to demonstrate strong homing tendencies to the wintering grounds. Birds banded during the 1963-64 and 1964-65 operations were retrapped in the same area during the 1966-67 banding program. This pertained mainly to the female lesser scaup.

One blue-winged teal banded here in September, 1965 was killed four months later in Columbia, South America. These birds are early migrants through Louisiana and winter in Central and South America.

Bird banding work and various studies of bird migration and distribution is a cooperative program between the Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife, State Conservation Agencies, private groups, and the Canadian and Mexican government. If bird banding is to be a worthwhile project many states and federal groups must work together. The banding done on Rockefeller Refuge, is just one of the many stations located throughout the United States and Canada that contributes information which aids in properly managing the continental waterfowl population. *



Biologists are removing lesser scaup from a trap on Rockefeller Refuge. Information gained from bands recovered from hunters and other trapping operations provide data on which to base long-range management recommendations for duck hunting on the North American Continent.